

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reexamination and reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of the rejection, and formal notification of the allowability of all claims as now presented are earnestly solicited in light of the above amendments and remarks that follow.

Claims 1-4, 10-28, and 31-38 are pending in the application. Claim 26 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 29 and, consequently, claims 29 and 30 have been cancelled. Claim 31 has been amended to correct dependency in light of the cancellation of claim 30. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is introduced by this amendment. In addition, Applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment because it is believed to place the application in condition for allowance.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has allowed claims 1-25 and merely objected to claims 29-31 as allowable if rewritten in independent form. In order to expedite prosecution, and not in acquiescence to any claim rejection of record, Applicants have amended independent claim 26 to incorporate the subject matter of original claim 29, which Examiner indicated would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims of record are now in condition for allowance. In light of the amendment of independent claim 26 as noted above, the rejection of claims 26-28 and 32-38 as unpatentable over the combination of the Xue *et al.* and Mentzel *et al.* patents has been rendered moot.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims of record are patentable over all references cited by the Examiner. Accordingly, a formal notification of the allowability of all claims is respectfully requested.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR §1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

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